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ABSTRACT

With the growing interest in oral history, this booklet provides guidelines for the development of oral history projects at the secondary level. There are various options for establishing oral history in the school program including an elective semester course, an independent study project, a minicourse, a cocurricular history club project, or an interdisciplinary course involving a number of curriculum areas. Descriptions of nine oral history curriculum-program options developed in Pennsylvania secondary schools are provided. Also included in the guidelines are a list of subject areas for student investigations, tips on interviewing community residents, a copy of an interview release form, tips for the use of interview materials, and two specialized questionnaires developed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. These questionnaires provide subject content and questions for the study of local ethnicity, community life, and labor-management relations. A list of local and oral resources and school publications across the country which are based on the Foxfire model are also included. (Author/DE)

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Guidelines for Oral History

Oral History: What? Why? How?

SO 008 849

Division of Arts and Humanities
Bureau of Curriculum Services
Pennsylvania Department of Education
1975

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Milton J. Shapp, *Governor*

Department of Education
John C. Pittenger, *Secretary*

Office of Basic Education
Frank S. Manchester, *Commissioner*
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Introduction

Oral history is the recording of information in the form of reminiscences by a narrator with first-hand knowledge of past events. It is a very old technique of recording information. The poet Homer sang of "arms and the man" and provided a vivid oral history of the Trojan Wars.

However, as a scholarly technique, oral history has become popular in the last two decades, and especially since 1970 the movement has accelerated and gained support. Many miles of taped reminiscences have been collected, and few colleges or universities do not list an oral history project.

A number of recent best sellers--Harry Truman's memoirs (Plain Speaking) and Studs Terkel's Hard Times and Working--are based on material secured from oral interviews. The increasing popularity of this technique stems partly from the realization that our communication patterns have changed. Letters and diaries have been replaced by telephone calls and brief memoranda. Much information, especially that which would clarify the background of governmental decision making, is never written down, whereas oral interviews with individuals who were present may provide a clearer perspective than secondary accounts.

Another reason for the increasing use of oral history is the realization on the part of some historians that the study of great events and great individuals, which has been the accepted scope and focus of history, does not provide a sufficiently comprehensive view of the past.

"From the perspective supplied by this new history, it has become clear that the experience of women, children, servants, slaves and other neglected groups are quite as integral to a comprehensive understanding of the past as that of lawyers, lords and ministers of state; that in terms of explaining social behavior popular culture is far more revealing than high culture." This quotation from an article by Jack Greene, history professor at Johns Hopkins, contains a rationale for identifying and using various types of sources (such as oral traditions) which had formerly been discounted or ignored. John Turner, of West Chester State College's History Department, says that oral history interviews can be "part of a process of writing history from the bottom up" to include the life experiences of average men and women. These people will never be listed in history books, but their attitudes and perceptions and their reactions to the routine and the extraordinary in their lives will result in a more comprehensive study of the past.

Recently this technique of collecting history has been initiated at the secondary level largely through the work of Eliot Wigginton, whose students in rural Georgia have produced collections of folklore based on personal interviews with older members of their community. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and published in a student-produced magazine. Collections were later published as Foxfire,Books I and II, both bestsellers. Adopting the Foxfire concept, student magazines (including The Inkwell, published by the students of Troy, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Mary C. Smyth) have been produced from Maine to Texas and outside the country. Of central importance in this concept is the recognition that young people of high school age or younger enjoy and learn much from a reporting and dialogue process involving older folks whose life experiences have been rich with practical and excitingly different information.

While most of these projects focus on rural life and traditions, a recent publication from Washington,D.C. (Western High School)--Cityscape--mirrors an urban multiethnic community. Instead of giving directions for boiling applebutter, it includes recipes for tamales and matzo ball soup. A listing of these magazines with addresses is included in the bibliography.

The purpose of these projects is to identify and preserve those aspects of the students' heritage which will never appear in the history books and which will give students a sense of identity with their past and a personal feeling of continuity. There are also accompanying values. Students have been able to find relevance in this type of "participatory" history. This direct involvement in investigating their past has resulted in increased motivation and a more positive attitude toward school. It has improved their communications skills in collecting, interpreting and presenting information. It has developed an appreciation of people of another generation and has given this older generation an opportunity to demonstrate its abilities and skills.

In the words of Stan Echols, one of Wigginton's students in Rabun Gap, "I've learned to take pictures and come back and print the pictures; I have learned to recognize a good photograph and its importance in communicating the idea I'm trying to get across. In writing introductions for articles I've learned to express myself and communicate, to try to get my actual feelings down on paper and learn to express myself more.... I've learned to appreciate the ingenuity of these people who existed over a hundred years ago. Stuff they didn't have they would just go out and figure out.... Then more significant than that, I've learned to appreciate the value of people working together, people being dependent on each other, like back in the days when people were 'self-sufficient....' I've been lucky to have an experience like this to help me out. It's really put me on a new road to ideas. I'm sure that I'm always going to be relying on the things that I have learned and experienced. It's made a difference in my life."

Integration of Oral History in the Curriculum

There are a number of options for establishing oral history in the school program. It may be an elective semester course, an independent study project or a means of enriching the established curriculum in social studies, language arts or fine arts/humanities. It may be a minicourse, a cocurricular history club project or an interdisciplinary course involving a number of curriculum areas. Examples of various program options can be found in Appendix A.

Studies of the local community are particularly useful because there are usually very few personal records of the past way of life of a local community. Many areas can be explored; selection will probably be influenced by student interest and availability of resources. Many residents will remember stories of earlier generations told by their parents, guardians or grandparents and will be willing to share old photographs, clothing and other memorabilia for reproduction. The following is not an exhaustive list, but it suggests a number of areas for student investigations:

Homes and furnishings

Food (cooking implements, food preservation,recipes)

Clothing (types, production, various crafts)

Schools, churches

Music (sacred, popular, ethnic ballads), musical instruments

Recreation (dances, games, children's toys, community festivals)

Farming, gardening, tools

Transportation (canals, railroads, trolleys, early automobiles)

Funerals, cemeteries

Medicine (herbal, home remedies, pow-wow charms)

Role of women

Superstitions and proverbs

Art and architecture

Industries (lumber, coal, fishing, hunting)

Important individuals in the community.

A detailed community survey focusing on labor/management relations is included in Appendix B.

Teachers wishing to initiate oral history programs should have the support of the administration for released time, flexible scheduling and student field experiences. It is most helpful to have the interest and cooperation of the business department, the librarian and the audiovisual services since they can assist with the use of equipment and the transcription and storage of the taped interviews.

Materials and Equipment

The basic equipment for an oral history program should include tape recorders (cassettes are preferable), tapes, cameras and transcription equipment. A video recorder used with a small TV camera can add a visual dimension to recorded history endeavors. Schools eligible for NDEA projects have secured much of this equipment with matching funds. If no federal or local school district money is available, we suggest exploration of financial support from community organizations: the Chamber of Commerce, service clubs, women's organizations, local historical societies and professional groups such as the American Association of University Women, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and ethnic fraternal associations.

Interviewing

After the students have selected a topic or area for study, they should develop a list of questions which might be useful. Usually their first ideas are too structured and general, and they will need guidance and practice in developing questionnaires which are specific and yet sufficiently informal to result in interesting and worthwhile responses. (See Appendix A for sample interview sheets.)

Students will need to spend several weeks on preparatory work, developing background on the selected topic. Research can begin with the resources of the local historical society such as pictures, records and other artifacts. City directories, courthouse deeds and wills, census statistics, high school yearbooks and church records will also yield valuable background material.

Every community has certain key individuals such as doctors, ministers, mail carriers, undertakers and retired teachers who can provide interesting anecdotal material on local history.

After the students become familiar with using the equipment, they should do a practice interview with a teacher, a member of the school custodial staff or administration. This interview should be limited in time and scope--perhaps five or 10 minutes dealing with one specific question such as "What was your first job?" These interviews should be transcribed and critiqued in class. Teachers may wish to have students do a preliminary hour-interview with a member of their immediate family or their oldest living relative or family friend. These attempts can be shared with other students.

Locating interviewees may be somewhat difficult, but usually they can be identified through churches, senior citizens' groups and volunteer organizations. In the case of an oral history project designed to secure the personal experiences of suffragists in a particular county, it was necessary to identify living members through a study of local newspaper files and obituary notices.

There are many lists of specific tips for interviewers, but the major suggestions for students would seem to be:

1. Ask brief questions phrased to require more of an answer than "yes" or "no."

2. Don't be afraid to have pauses in the interview.

3. Don't interrupt a good story even though it does not seem to be relevant to your planned outline of questions; tangents taken by an interviewee may lead to productive information.

4. Don't challenge or try to correct information which you think is inaccurate; check later for accuracy and/or possible bias.

5. Don't switch the recorder off unless there is a genuine interruption.

6. Don't do any more talking than necessary--it's an interview, not a dialogue.

7. Don't continue the interview beyond an hour; stop whenever your interviewee appears tired.

8. Check the time at the beginning of the interview and remember the length of the tape so that you can cut off the interview at least five minutes before the tape ends.

At the beginning, the interviewer should explain the purpose of collecting this material; the persons being interviewed should understand that they are

contributing to a study of their local heritage and that their interviews will be preserved in a place where they will be available for future generations. Never record without the permission of the person being interviewed, and be sure that you have a signed release to show that the interview was more than friendly talk.

Release form developed by Foxfire. (See Appendix A, Union County Project, for other oral history forms.)

To: (student's name and school project)

From:

I hereby give my permission to _____

to publish any verbal or written information I have given as well as any photographs taken. I understand that this material will never be used in any way that would be detrimental to me.

Signed_____

Date_____

Students should begin the interview by introducing themselves and the person to be interviewed, giving the date (month, day and year) and location of the interview. At the conclusion, a similar announcement should be made. Depending on the subject and the nature of the interview, it may be helpful for two or three students to be present; however, one individual should be assigned the primary responsibility as interviewer.

Use of the Interview Materials

The tapes should be transcribed and edited and may be used as the basis for articles in a student publication modeled on the Foxfire concept. They should be labeled with the name of the interviewer and the name of the interviewee, the date and a brief summary of the contents, and should be catalogued for future reference by students and others interested in the study of local history. School librarians are becoming more aware of the role of oral history materials in curriculum development and are beginning to acquire tapes as part of their audio collections.

Detailed instructions for transcribing, editing and cataloguing oral history tapes are given in several of the books listed in the bibliography. Ives's A Manual for Field Workers and Shumway's A Guide for Oral History Programs are most complete.

The following section should prove most valuable to schools wishing to initiate oral history programs. It contains copies of materials which were developed in a number of Pennsylvania schools and which were sent to the Department of Education in response to a request for oral history information. This listing is not all-inclusive, but we hope that the variety of selected programs will reflect the scope and potential of oral history as an instructional technique.

APPENDIX A

MATERIALS FROM PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

--

ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Relationship to interviewer (friend, relative, etc. . . .).
2. In what year were you born?
3. What did your father do for a living?
4. Did your mother work? If so, what did she do?
5. What was your first job? What did you get paid?
6. What did you do in your spare time when you were 11, 12 or 13 years old?
7. Describe the school in which you spent your junior high years. What subjects did you study in 7th grade? Did you have a lot of homework? Did you like school? Why? Why not?
8. Did you have a cafeteria in the above school? What did you eat for lunch?
9. What sports did your school offer to junior high students? What clubs did your school offer?
10. How did you get to junior high school? What was the most common type of transportation at this time?
11. What kind of clothes did you wear to junior high school?
12. When you were 11, 12 or 13 years old, what would you want your mother to buy when she went to the grocery store? How much did a candy bar cost?
13. If you lived in Bangor during your junior high school years, what did Bangor look like then? How has Bangor changed since then?
14. Describe your first car.

Bangor Area Junior High School
44 South Third Street
Bangor, PA 18013

Anthony DeCesare, acting head of
Junior High Social Studies Program

Local History - Civics - 9th Grade

The United States is made up of many different religious, racial and cultural groups. As a nation we will stay together only if we all learn to live together and respect one another. Difference is natural, normal and positive.

Appreciation of what we have been, are and might be is important in our lives. Therefore, in a hope that it will create a greater understanding of our area you will prepare an oral report keeping in mind these guidelines.

1. This will be your semester test grade.

2. You will report on the town in which you live (or on the town that is your mailing address).

3. You will be graded on all of the topics listed in the evaluation sheet.

4. The report is to be as long as is necessary to finish your topic.

The following outline should serve as a guideline to your oral report. It is not necessary to follow this exactly as it is written since it is hoped that you would add some originality of your own to the topic.

I. Past History

A. How did this settlement begin? Why? When? By whom?
B. How did your area get its name?
C. How did your area develop?
D. What is the area like in relation to:
   1. land
   2. resources
   3. location
E. What ethnic groups were the original settlers in your area? What customs did they bring with them?
   What wave of immigrants came to your area in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

II. Present

A. What kind of an economy is represented in your area?
B. What type of government runs your town?
C. Who are the present governmental officials?
D. What type of education is available in your community?
E. What races, nationalities and religions are represented in your community?
F. What part does a political affiliation play in your community?
G. How do all of the above items affect your community?

III. Future Outlook

Based on your study of the past and present, project the future development of your town.

Extra Grade Projects

These may be done and turned in anytime until the end of the year. They will count as a test grade.

1. Develop a set of slides on one specific topic relating to your community. Write a script explaining what is being shown. Donate these to the civics class.

   Examples of past projects:

   1. Coal mines of Raccoon area
   2. Covered bridges and area surrounding Paris
   3. Burgettstown
   4. Eldersville
   5. Langeloth
   6. Slovan

   Examples of what could be done:

   1. Spring flowers at Raccoon State Park
   2. Various historical sites in area (Burgetts' grave, old buildings, etc.)

2. Interview an area resident. Tape record the interview and donate the tape to the civics class. Questions should be prepared in advance of making the recording and should be approved by the teacher.

   Examples of subject areas that could be taped:

   Discussions of:
   - a. nationality holiday customs
   - b. early history of the town
   - c. experiences working in coal mine
   - d. experiences working in local plants

   Personal experiences of events:
   - a. World War I, World War II, Korean War
   - b. local events (fire, floods, etc.)

3. Have copies made of old photographs or books of your area that you have located and donate them to the civics class.

4. Collect recipes of nationality dishes and make a cook book. Donate to the civics class.

5. Any original project dealing with our local area prepared by you. These must be approved by the instructor in advance. A simple written report is not acceptable.

Burgettstown Area School District
Mary Elaine Lozosky

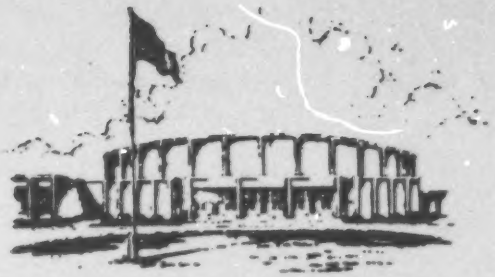
Greater Latrobe High School

ROBERT E. LAVELY
PRINCIPAL

WILLIAM E. LUTZ
ASST. PRINCIPAL

JAMES A. OLA
HOUSE DIRECTOR

VERONICA V. THOMPSON
HOUSE DIRECTOR



BOX 452 · LATROBE, PENNSYLVANIA 15650
PHONE 412 / 539-9791

March 10, 1975

Ms. Elizabeth S. Haller
Program Adviser - Social Studies
Division of Arts and Humanities
Bureau of Curriculum Services
Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 1712(

Dear Ms. Haller:

I have been asked to answer your inquiry about our study which incorporates oral history. During this school year, 1975-75, we are piloting a social studies elective which we, teachers and students, decided to call Historical Research Projects. This course, which students now call HRP, was planned jointly with the teacher (James Harvey), students, our solicitor (Ned Nakles, who heads the Greater Latrobe Historical Society), and me. The students involved heard about the course, and their interest was the criterion for their involvement. We met many times during the second semester of the 1973-74 school year. During these initial meetings we planned, discussed, and investigated a format for the course and a possible area of historical investigation for each student.

Basically, the rationale for the course capitalizes on student interest to involve students in the historical method as they hypothesize, test the hypothesis by collecting, organizing and evaluating data, conclude, and generalize about a historical question concerning the Latrobe area. Our "alliance" with the Greater Latrobe Historical Society helps both groups. Our students use the date of the society and at the same time expand the quantity of that data. The students have brought in a variety of different kinds of data and added this to the resources of the society. One particular source of data that they have effectively collected is "oral history."

Each student selected one area for research. They chose such topics as the railroad, coal mining, ethnicity, the "patches," and entertainment. Students use materials such as: the 70-plus years of the editions of the local newspaper on microfilm, checks, ledgers, diaries, letters, cards, and other data in the possession of the society or citizens of the community; oral history; and other primary source materials. We are beginning to accumulate a library of oral history sources. Some of these interviews of local senior citizens are recorded on videotape; however, the expense of this medium limits its usefulness, and we have turned instead to a more extensive use of audio cassettes.

In preparation for these interviews, students observed video cassettes, preplanned relevant questions, and utilized family members for the preliminary interviews so that they would be more comfortable in their first efforts in collecting oral history. All of us have participated in collecting oral history. Not only is this a valuable primary source for this class, we use this source in other projects in the social studies curriculum. Additionally, involving students in learning in the community philosophically supports our continuing efforts to expand the walls of the classroom and incorporate the community in helping us help students learn.

Ned Nakles has been an invaluable help to us. He has a real "sense of history" and knows the necessity of collecting oral history from our senior citizens while they are available to help us. The students thoroughly enjoy the taping sessions, and the adults they interview obviously enjoy being of value to the students.

Students have class daily throughout the year and most class members are seniors. They receive one credit for this class, and you may be interested to know that all class members are taking other social studies courses as well.

At this point, we are less than satisfied with the results of our initial efforts. We feel that students' potential for learning in this way is unlimited, and we have only begun to scratch the surface. Our plans for next year are being evaluated at this time, and we feel there are many more ways we can utilize community resources to expand this learning experience for our students.

I hope that I have answered many of your questions about this course. If not, please feel free to forward any other questions you may have. I am most enthusiastic about the course, and I am happy to share the value of this project with others.

Very truly yours,

Martha S. Rupert
Social Studies Coordinator

MSRtmer

Oral History Form #1
(for Marple Newtown Junior
High Bicentennial Celebration)

Dear Student:

Attached to this note is a suggested format (form) that you could use when you interview (talk with) a person in the Marple Newtown community. The main reason for using this form is just to keep you from forgetting a question. Sometimes even what may seem to be an unimportant question might help the person you are interviewing remember something really very important.

Please be courteous to the person you interview and if he/she does not have time to talk longer with you, ask them if you may return some other time. Also, I guess you know it's important to thank them.

Good luck!

Oral History Form #1
(for Marple Newtown Junior
High Bicentennial Celebration)

DATE:

THE NAME OF THE PERSON YOU ARE INTERVIEWING:

Possible questions: (You may have some of your own)

1. How long have you lived in the Marple Newtown community?
2. What was it like when you went to school?
3. What does the Bicentennial Celebration mean to you?
4. Are you planning on becoming involved in any way in the Bicentennial Celebration?
5. What beneficial changes do you think could be brought about by the Bicentennial?
6. Do you think today's patriotism is equivalent to the way it was when you were young?
7. Do you think we have leaders today who could be compared to leaders of early America?
8. Would you be willing to display early America artifacts (articles made by human work or art) at our junior high?

Our Lady of Lourdes Regional High School
Shamokin, Pa. Rev. Thomas Haney, Principal
Teacher: Sister William Anne

EUROPEAN CULTURES

Theme: Ethnic Origins

BACKGROUND

After reading the author's preface carefully, your curiosity should be aroused enough to want to know the answer to the question "Who am I?" In order to answer this question correctly we will have to search into our various cultural backgrounds. Since all of us have roots in some phase of European culture, it should be a contract that will be relevant and make us aware of our heritage and answer the question of cultural identity.

For this first contract of the semester, each of you will research your individual ancestry. It might be well to have an interview with your grandparents, parents or any of your older aunts or uncles to see what customs have been handed down to your family from Europe.

Pre-evaluation

Please answer these questions as accurately as you are able. You may either answer them on this paper or use a piece that can be put into your folder.

1. My baptismal name is _____. My surname is _____, this is of _____origin (nationality).

2. My mother's maiden name was _____ which is of _____ origin.

3. Of these two nationalities, I feel more _____.

4. If I had my choice I would have liked to be of _____ descent.

5. The oldest living relative on my father's side is _____ who is _____years old.

6. The oldest living relative on my mother's side is _____ who is _____ years old.

7. My family (does, does not) observe some national customs.

8. The day on which my family celebrates most is _____

9. _____is the most common form in which we express our native culture.

10. The European country I would like most to visit is _____ because _____

_____

_____

LEVEL 1. To earn an 80, you must do each of the following activities.

Objective #1. To understand the various characteristics given to make up a specific national culture.	Activity #1. Teacher-learner discussion that will name the various aspects of culture. These will be listed on the board and examples will be given. After the term is thoroughly understood each will make a collage illustrating his/her own distinct cultural background. When it has been completed, it is to be displayed on the back wall of the classroom.
Objective #2. To experience through a simulation game the effect of an alien culture on people.	Activity #2 Use two class periods to experience the effects of cross cultures. Use the simulation game "BAFA BAFA."
Objective #3. To present the experiences of acceptance and rejection to the group verbally.	Activity #3. Each culture group appoints a representative to report orally to the class the emotions experienced while playing the game. The same representative should outline what values and norms were observed during the game.
Objective #4. To construct a family coat of arms which will be representative of your particular family.	Activity #4. Construct a coat of arms that will be a story of your heritage. Devise symbols which will illustrate all the cultural ingredients of your background: national background religion occupation strongest characteristics There should be a motto preferably in the native language. Be sure you are aware of the English translation.

LEVEL 2.

Objective #5. To share with others of different cultural backgrounds, the distinctive features of your origins.	Activity #5. Form a group of four. Each member must represent a different European background. Take your coat of arms into the group and explain each part and its significance to your family.
Objective #6. To show the physical characteristics that are distinctive of your European nationality.	Activity #6. Stay in the same group as that of Activity #5. Examine either photographs or pictures from National Geographic that will visualize the familiar characteristics of your background. For instance: American Indians Straight black hair Dark eyes High cheek bones Swarthy complexion Lean body

Objective #7. To share some part of your cultural background with the entire class.	Activity #7. To bring in some example of your ethnic culture. This could be one of many things: a native art piece, a record of ethnic music, a demonstration of a folk dance, a model of a native folk costume, a reading of a poem that illustrates your country's literature, a fable that has its origins in your heritage.
Objective #8. To establish a sense of pride in the learner's cultural background.	Activity #8. Using what you have now learned about your ancestors, construct an 8" x 12" poster that could be used to attract people to that exhibition at a cultural fair.

Level 3. You must do all the preceding activities plus these to earn 95.

Objective #9. To create an original poem about a particular country.	Activity #9. Each learner will compose an original poem in which the strengths of the native country will be extolled.
Objective #10. To develop an appreciation for ethnic foods.	Activity #10. Form groups that will represent one nationality. This group should work together in making one of their distinctive national dishes to share with the other learners.
Objective #11. To discover when and why the family emigrated to the United States.	Activity #11. Research when your family came to the United States. Find the reasons for their leaving their native land and the means they used to travel. Find out why they came to this specific area.

TERMINAL EVALUATION:

Write an essay in which you tell of the achievements that immigrants of your national background have made in the United States. This can include art, architecture, literature, science, medicine, music, sports, religion or any other field of endeavor.

The Inkwell Project
Troy Area High School, Troy, Pa. 16947

Advisers: Mary C. Smyth, coordinator of The Inkwell
Marie Canedy, typing and layout
Thomas Borgeson, printing

1. The Inkwell is part of the language arts curriculum. Students elect to take factual writing, of which The Inkwell magazine is a culminating activity. The layout and typing of the magazine is a project of the advanced typing class. The printing is also done by students under the supervision of Thomas Borgeson.

2. Student involvement varies from year to year. This year we have about 50 students and three faculty members involved. (See #1 and list of advisers.)

3. Problems: There are always problems: student procrastination; adult interviewees who take trips and are thus not available for information; inadequate funds; lack of equipment, especially cameras and tape recorders; and considerable time spent collating and stapling the magazine together. This last item is probably the most frustrating; doing the stapling and folding is slow, time-consuming, hard work.

4. Suggestions: In spite of all the problems, the program is so worthwhile to the students, faculty, school and community that we are fighting to keep The Inkwell going even though funds are short. It has been a special privilege to talk to the many area people who enjoy reading our publication. The Inkwell has been a real joy to the senior citizens of the area who are our most ardent supporters. Without this magazine much of our local heritage would be lost forever.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Woman in American History,
developed by Ann Schofield, instructor,
East Stroudsburg State College

I. Pre-interview session

Explain the project to the subject. Explain that you are interested in hearing about her childhood, her coming of age and her life as a woman in America. The "great" events of history should concern you only as they directly relate to our subject. Try to see what response on your part will "open up" your subject. Be patient--often lengthy stories will reveal much about your customs and attitudes. Do not take notes. Try not to create an academic atmosphere. The subject should feel relaxed and even enthused about the project following this initial session.

Your subject may never have done anything exceptional, but the sameness and the commonplace in her life will tell us something of the history of women in America.

II. Interview questions

Use the following questions only as guidelines. Study them before beginning your interview and add questions or areas of inquiry pertinent to your subject.

1. Organization of family life
   Did family members other than the parents and their children live in the same apartment or house, in the same building, along the same street or in the same neighborhood? Did married daughters or sons continue to live in their parents' household? What were the daily schedules of family members? How did they spend their time at home and their holidays? What were the household duties of the woman and the girls in the family? What were their duties during holiday celebrations? What were the seating arrangements during meals?

   At what age did sons and daughters leave home to embark on their careers? What was the family attitude toward the work of the woman? What was the family's attitude toward the schooling of woman?

2. Role models and role expectations
   As a child, what did the subject want to be when she grew up? Did this goal change with age? What influenced this change? Whom did the subject admire as a child? Why? Did the subject read as a child? What books or type of books?

3. Marital status
   If your subject was single, what kind of pressures did she feel from her family? How did she support herself? Where did she live? Did she regret not marrying? What seems to be the attitudes of the rest of the family towards her? What were her attitudes toward them? Were her family responsibilities different from those of her married siblings? What were her attitudes toward aging?

If your subject is/was married, at what age did she marry? Was there pressure from her family to marry? From society? Why did she marry? Was her marriage a good one? What does she consider a good marriage to be? Did she have children? Were they born at home or in a hospital? Did she fear the experience of childbirth? If so, why? Does she have regrets?

If your subject is divorced, separated, widowed, adapt the above questions to suit these situations.

4. Work outside the home

If your subject worked outside the home, what kind of work did she do? Were there pressures on her to work or not to work? Did she work from choice or necessity? Did she work at the job she had prepared for by education (teacher, nurse, etc.) or a job that she took and then learned the skills? Did she like to work? Did she like her job? Did she work while children were still at home? Why did she work? How were her children cared for while she was at work? Did she feel pressured for not staying at home? Was she paid the same salary as a man working with her? If not, does she think this was fair?

If your subject stayed at home, how did she feel about housework? Did she do any volunteer work which took her out of the home? Did she have a desire to have a job, a career, life away from her family? Had she been prepared for a career which she never took up? If her children are grown, or still at home, does she want to go to school or pursue a job?

5. Women's or reform groups

With what reform or women's groups was your subject involved? What was her role in these reforms or groups? Did she belong to any women's clubs? Which ones and in what capacity? Was she active in her church? If so, how? If she was not personally involved in any of the above, what is her feeling about women who are? Does she know anything about the women's rights movement before the vote was achieved? What are her feelings about the current women's movement? What women does she admire?

West Chester Project

Henderson High School, West Chester,
Frank Wright, department chairman

West Chester State College,
John Turner, history department

Chester County Historical Society

This project, cooperatively sponsored by the above agencies, is a study to collect data through oral interviews of West Chester's black community during the depression years. While some of this work was initiated in the American Cultures course last year, Frank Wright also teaches a senior seminar in oral history.

During the summer of '75, students compiled a comprehensive list of old West Chester black families using records of the historical society, of churches, news clipping files, high school yearbooks and phone directories. In addition to this identification of interviewees, students studied the depression, formulated a list of interview questions, and became familiar with the basic techniques of oral history.

The information resulting from these interviews will be preserved in the Chester County Historical Society as well as the archives of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and will be reported in an oral history conference this fall. Students have also prepared a videotape of some of the earlier interviews.

Main areas to be covered by the interview:

I. Introduction: Basic questions to be asked at the start of each interview
   A. Name of interviewer, place, date
   B. Person being interviewed
      1. age (be careful with this one, do not insist if narrator seems reluctant to disclose age)
      2. place of birth
      3. occupation (former, if retired)

II. Family History
   A. Do you know where your family originated?
      1. Where were your parents born?
      2. If not in West Chester, when and why did your parents come to West Chester?
   B. Were the members of your family involved in various occupations?
   C. What were your parents' occupations?
   D. Who do you think was the chief disciplinarian in your family when you were growing up? Was this common of the black community?
   E. Do you think that the mother and father play an equal role in raising the children?
   F. Would you please describe the relationship you had with each of your parents while you were growing up?
   G. Who is the oldest living member of your family?
   H. Has your family made a point to make it traditional that your family history should be passed down from one generation to another?
   I. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
   J. Did anyone outside of your immediate family live in your home during the depression? Had they always lived there?
      1. How many of your brothers and sisters lived at home?
      2. Did both of your parents live at home with you?
   K. Did the owner of your house change during the depression?
   L. Did your family and relatives live in a concentrated area or in several locations?
   M. While you were growing up, was your neighborhood primarily black? Is it still?

III. Depression Experiences of Person Being Interviewed
   A. How extensive was your education?
      1. Was that typical of most people in your neighborhood?
      2. Were the schools you attended segregated?
   B. Which did your parents stress more, work or education?
   C. If you were a child during the depression, did you work? Did your income go to the support of your household?
   D. At what age did you leave school and begin work?
   E. What was your first job?
   F. Were blacks employed in local industries?
   G. How far away was your job? Did you have any work benefits? Were whites also employed to do the same type of work which you were involved in, or was it a primarily black occupation?
   H. Were you anxious to leave West Chester in search of something better?
      1. Was it the depression that caused you to think of leaving?
      2. Did you ever feel that it might be worthwhile to seek employment in the cities?

III. (Continued)

I. Were there any labor unions in existence during the depression?
   1. Were you involved in any?
   2. Was any member of your family or someone in your neighborhood involved in any?
   3. Which ones, if any, had more benefits for the black community?

J. Would you please describe some of the hardest problems you faced while growing up and making a home of your own in West Chester?
   1. Did you feel any types of discrimination?
   2. Did you have trouble finding housing or work?

K. What job or jobs did you have during the depression?

L. Did you experience any occupational advancements or declines as a result of the depression?

M. Can you explain when the depression began as far as you were concerned?
   1. What did you think <u>at the time</u> were the causes of the depression?
   2. At the time, did you think that the Hoover administration was effective in dealing with the depression?

N. Did you vote during the depression? Was it your first time?

O. Were you familiar with the events which were happening throughout the nation and the world?
   1. Who or what notified you as to what was happening? Radio? Friends?
   2. Would you please explain the most crucial international and national events which you remember?
   3. Were there any events which you think created divisions within the black community?

P. What help were you aware of from the national, state or local government during the depression?
   1. Where did you first learn that help was available from government agencies?
   2. Would you describe your participation in any of the government programs which you were involved in?
   3. Were the government aid programs segregated?
   4. Did you feel that blacks were given equal aid to that which was offered to the members of the white community?

Q. Did nongovernmental agencies such as the NAACP, the Salvation Army, or any church group or fraternal organization aid the black community during the depression?

R. Were you an active member of any social or fraternal organization?

S. Did any churches play important parts in the community?
   1. Were you an active member of any church?
   2. Was the minister an active participant in the community?
   3. If you were a member of a church, did your church provide any type of aid or support during the depression?

T. Was there a black awareness movement in the community?
   1. If there was, was there any particular event that you know of which triggered its being established.
   2. Were you a participant in the movement?

U. How did the black community determine its leaders during the depression?

V. Did Prohibition have any effect on the black community.

W. Can you describe some of the things which you did to survive the hardships of the depression?

X. When you were sick, who gave you medical attention?
   1. Were you able to go to the Chester County Hospital?
   2. Did your company or employer provide any sick pay?

Y. Were you or a member of your family covered by any type of insurance?

Z. Did you have any experiences with personal bank losses during the depression? Can you describe any experiences which your friends had?

III. (Continued)

AA. How did you spend your leisure time during the depression? Movies? Radio? Working an extra job?

BB. Were there any luxuries which you or your family could afford?
1. Did your family ever travel?
2. Did your family ever take vacations?

CC. While you were growing up, did you have any lifetime goals or plans? Did the depression upset or somehow delay your achieving these goals?

DD. When did the depression end as far as you were concerned?

EE. Do you believe that the American dream of achieving success through hard work applied to blacks? Did the depression have any effect on this belief?

IV. Unstructured

At this point the interviewer should encourage the narrator to elaborate on any aspect of the depression he/she wants to, or is especially knowledgeable about. The narrator should be encouraged to evaluate his/her occupational career, and the degree of success attained in West Chester.

UNION COUNTY BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
Oral Traditions/Folk Culture Protram

Jeannette Lasansky, director

While this project did not originally involve students, plans are being made to extend the work beyond the Bicentennial and to include students at various grade levels.

BACKGROUND OF ORAL TRADITIONS

Local redware pottery from New Berlin, the stoneware crocks that were made in Mooresburg, rye-coil and splint baskets filled with herbs and homemade soap, as well as the brass and copper utensils used in making apple butter, bring to mind those traditions that were passed down from generation to generation -- orally. Our area in central Pennsylvania is still rich in oral traditions: the drying of foods, distilling, butchering, hunting stories, maple-sugaring, home remedies, planting by the signs, tinsmithing, blacksmithing, logging, clay potteries, quilting, spinning, dyeing, weaving, old-time burials, fiddling, superstitions, tall tales, faith-healing, the one-room school house tradition, soap-making, basketry, furniture construction and chair-seating--rush, splint, and cane.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

These traditions will be collected on tape and film by volunteers working for the Bicentennial--school children, teachers, college students and interested adults. The Union County Court House, or a similar public building, will house a library of classified and indexed oral tapes, transcriptions, slides and videotapes. This material can be the basis for school projects, for scholarly work by college students and professors, for possible publication and for multimedia programs of our own. In addition we are available to speak on the methods of researching oral traditions.

The county-wide project will culminate in 1976. Exhibitions of our area's folk culture are planned--quilting and weaving, Fraktur and printing, wood-working, tinsmithing/blacksmithing, and pottery-making with local clays. Demonstrations of these crafts will be presented to groups throughout Union County by people we're talking with now.

WORK COMPLETED

In this past year, we began research on oral recording methods, devised a system of tape and subject indexing and transcription, and went "public" on the project in our communities in an effort to get volunteers, ideas and sources. Nearly 80 people, mainly 50- to 95-year-olds, are on our source list waiting to be taped. Their enthusiasm has been as important as the information gathered.

We have presented our first slide and tape shows, and our collection of nearly 70 tapes and hundreds of slides and photographs continues to grow. Currently involved in the Oral Traditions/Folk Culture Program are nine interviewers, a dozen interested teachers, and five photographers, as well as a number of secretaries.

The project has been funded by the Union County Commissioners for the past two years. It has applied for, and received, additional funds and media services from America the Beautiful Fund, Washington, D.C., and a grant from the Pennsylvania Bicentennial Commission. Applications for grant assistance have also been sent to the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Oral Traditions Program
Union County Bicentennial Commission

INTERVIEWER HISTORY

Date filed:

Name:

Birthdate and birthplace:

Address and telephone:

Schooling: (include degrees awarded or in progress)

Occupations: (or avocations related in any way to project)

Work on tapes:

Area interested in taping:

Tape no.	Role	Date	Time

Oral Traditions Program
Union County Bicentennial Commission

INTERVIEWEE HISTORY

Name: Photo:

Date filed:

Reference for this interviewee:

References given by the interviewee:

Birthdate and birthplace:

Address and telephone:

Schooling:

Work experience:

Interests:

Initial reason to be taped:

Tape sessions:

Tape no.	Interviewer(s)	Date	Time

Evaluation and comments: (note willingness to demonstrate skills to school children, exhibit documents, etc.)

Oral Traditions Program
Union County Bicentennial Commission

TAPE INDEX

Tape no.: Date: Time length:

Interviewer(s):

Interviewee(s):

Place:

Evaluation or comments:

Transcribed by: Date:

Subject	Place on tape (side plus revolution count)

Oral Traditions Program
Union County Bicentennial Commission

SUBJECT INDEX

Tape no.	Place on tape	Photos or slides

ORAL TRADITIONS/FOLK CULTURE-HISTORY PROGRAM

Union County Bicentennial Commission
Union County Court House
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837

I hereby give to the Union County Bicentennial Commission, Inc., Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, for scholarly use and purposes as the Executive Committee and Director of the Oral Traditions Program shall determine, the following tape(s) of interview(s):

tape	subject	date recorded
tape	subject	date recorded
tape	subject	date recorded
tape	subject	date recorded

INTERVIEWEE signature

address

INTERVIEWER signature

address

DIRECTOR, ORAL TRADITIONS PROGRAM signature

CHAIRPERSON, UNION COUNTY BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION signature

date of agreement

For sealed material: *The parties hereto agree that pages _____ of the manuscript and the portions of the tape from which these pages were transcribed shall not be published or otherwise made available to anyone other than the parties hereto until _____.*

32

Tape # _____

Name of Interviewee: _____
(Last Name) (First Name)

STAGES	Date Completed	Initials
a) Date tape was done	_____	_____
b) Tape indexed	_____	_____
c) Subject indexed	_____	_____
d) Director listened to for transcription value	_____	_____
e) Follow up tape done	_____	_____
f) Transcript done	_____	_____
g) Transcript index	_____	_____
h) Complimentary photos or slides	_____	_____
i) Biographical and release statements sent	_____	_____
j) Biographical and release statement received	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

SPECIALIZED QUESTIONNAIRES:

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

BASIC ORAL HISTORY ETHNICITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Developed by: Ethnic Studies Program (John Bodnar)
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
(Revised January 1975)

Main areas to be covered in interviews:

(1) Introduction: Basic questions to be asked at the start of each interview and required information.

- Name of interviewer, place, date?
- Person being interviewed:
  - age?
  - place of birth?
  - ethnic origin?
  - occupation?
  - religious and political affiliations?

(2) Family history: I

- Birthplace of parents?
- When did parents enter this area?
- Why did they come to this area?
- All locations parents lived before coming to this area?
- Father's occupational history?
- Did mother work? - When? - Where? - How long?
- Did any relatives or boarders reside in the household?
- Did children do household work?
- Parents' views on religion, education, values, etc.?
- Particular problems of being second generation?
- Size of family?
- What do you recall of depression days (1930s)?

(3) Occupational History Person Being Interviewed:

- Did you work as a child?
- Did any of your income go toward the support of your household?
- First adult occupation?
- Occupational advancements or declines?
- Did you have to move around in search of work?
- Union activities?
- What was your first job? - Last job?
- Do you recall any strikes? - What were the issues involved? What was your role? - Who were the strikebreakers?
- Were you ever discriminated against for any reason?
- What did you think of unions? - What union did you join?
- Was your job hazardous? - What measures were taken to insure your safety?

(4) Career evaluation:

- As a young person what did you want to do in life?
- Did you aspire to any particular job?
- Was your job better than your father's?
- How long did you go to school?
- What was your father's last job?
- What did you do in your work?
- What job did you feel you were capable of attaining?
- Did you ever want to leave your job for a "better one" or start a business of your own? - Why?
- Were you able to pretty much control your own career?
- What opportunities were open to you for advancement in your job?
- Did you feel you earned respect? - Why?
- Were you successful in your career? - Why?
- Did your efforts benefit your children?
- What are you most proud of in your life?

(5) Family history: II

- Did you feel "closer" to your mother or your father?
- Was your relationship with your parents intimate or distant?
- Was either of your parents strict-authoritarian?
- Was either of your parents away at work a great deal?
- Were you anxious to leave your ethnic neighborhood? - Home?
- Did you have to sacrifice your own aspirations to family need (depression)?
- Which of your parents wanted you to work?
- Which stressed education?
- At what age did you begin working?
- What per cent of your earnings did you turn over to your parents? What per cent did you keep?
- Did you differ with your parents on how much of your earnings you could keep?

(6) Residential history:

- How many different places have you lived?
- Did you live in an "ethnic neighborhood"?
- Did you ever leave your neighborhood because of your job? Arrival of other ethnic groups?
- Did you live near your work?

(7) Unstructured:

- At this point the interviewees should be encouraged to elaborate on any aspect of their lives which they wish to discuss, for example, their political affiliations or membership in church groups or fraternal associations.

Sample Oral History Questionnaire on Community Life
(focus on managers and workers of
major community industries or businesses)

Developed by: Historical and Museum Commission (Carl Oblinger)

We have no ideas presently of the nature of small town life considered as a whole in Pennsylvania during the last years of the 19th century and the three decades before the Great Depression. Hopefully, by initiating oral history programs designed to explore community life, the students can get a broader understanding of the impact of community life on the fabric of an industrializing state; examine the processes of change in a relevant and personalized framework; and compare the changed circumstances of their lives with the patterns of communities removed only fifty years from their experiences.

I For Managers and Owners of Small Businesses:

(1) Introduction: The interviewer should ask these basic questions at the beginning of each session.

- Name of interviewer, place, date?
- Person being interviewed:
  - name?
  - age?
  - place of birth?
  - occupation (if retired, previous occupation)?

(2) Personal History:

- Birthplace of parents?
- When did parents settle in the area?
- Parents' occupational history?
- Parents' values?
- Any home town memories?
- Where subject has lived?
- Places of residence in the city (a good index of social prestige and "belonging")? Why did you move?

(3) Community Involvement:

- Did you and do you still participate in local community life? Be specific and probe the subject on civic memberships such as the boards of the local hospital, the public library, and school committee; involvement in city and country club, and drama, theatre, music and art associations.
- To which church do you belong?
- How powerful were you in the affairs of the community (did the subject influence past events) in any significant way?
- Do you like this community?
- Does your wife or husband like this community?

(4) The Company:

- Who owned the equipment? (different dates)
- Where did you sell your product and how? (in the local market or international competition)
- What were the most important jobs in the company? (should give you hierarchy of jobs--if many of the previously skilled jobs have lost their status, obviously the workplace has been affected by outside forces)
- Were worker and management relations characterized by any degree of conflict?
- Would you say that a worker could approach you relatively often?
- Would you say that there was a "common" way of life among the company's workers?
- Could you make decisions on your own, or did someone else make them?

(5) Unstructured:

At this point interviewers should encourage interviewees to elaborate about any aspect of their life which they want to discuss. They may wish to elaborate their roles in politics, in a church group, or in a service organization. They should be encouraged to discuss any point already mentioned in the interview.

II For Workers:

(1) Introduction: The interviewers should ask these basic questions at the beginning of each session.

- Name of interviewer, place, date?
- Person being interviewed:
  - name?
  - age ?
  - place of birth?
  - occupation and with whom (if retired, previous occupation)?
  - religion, politics?

(2) Personal History:

- Birthplace of parents (from where was the labor force drawn)?
- When did parents enter this area?
- Why did they come to this area?
- Size of family?
- Places of residence in the city?
- Who have been your neighbors?

(3) Occupational History:

- When did you begin working and where? (have subject give an occupational history)
- What skills does your subject have? (independent status or a cog in the machine)
- What jobs did you hold at various periods?
- When you had low-paying jobs did you know you would advance in the company?

- What opportunities were open to you for advancement?
- Was your pay satisfactory?
- Did you serve an apprenticeship? (if there was no need for apprenticeship and the gradual acquisition of the skills of the trade, the hierarchy of labor may have been flattened out and people could be viewed as interchangeable cogs)
- Did you like your job?
- Where did a person with your skills fit into the company?
- How did you view the older workers in the plant?
- Whom did you respect in your place of work? (who respects whom in the town for work skills is an important indicator of status)

(4) Management and Labor:

- How did you feel toward management? Did the feeling change?
- Did you know your boss? In what capacity? (personal or job-related)
- Was there conflict between you and your boss?
- How did you settle grievances?
- Did you feel a sense of solidarity with other workers?
- Did you belong to a union? Do you remember its organization?

(5) Career Evaluation:

- Did you feel you earned respect? Why?
- Were you successful in your career? Why?
- What do your children do to earn a living?

(6) Unstructured:

At this point interviewers should encourage interviewees to elaborate about any aspect of their life which they want to discuss. They may wish to elaborate their roles in politics, in a church group, or in a service organization. They should be encouraged to discuss any point already mentioned in the interview.

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Cityscape, Western High School, Washington, D.C. 20007.
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Examines orally-transmitted traditions and stories of Minnesota.

Salt, Kennebunk High School. Kennebunk, Maine 04046.
Folklore, crafts and traditions of the rural coastal region of Maine.

Sea Chest, Cape Hatteras High School, Buxton, North Carolina 27936.
Stories, traditions and environment of the Outer Banks.

Shenango, College for Senior Americans, Edinboro State College, Sharon, Pennsylvania 16121.
Multiethnic traditions in an old industrial region in western Pennsylvania.

Skipjack, South Dorchester High School, Church Creek, Maryland 21622.
Life and traditions of the Chesapeake Bay Area.

Thistledown, Watkins Memorial High School, Pataskala, Ohio 43062.
Rural life and traditions in Ohio.

Tsa'aszi, Ramah Navajo High School, Ramah, New Mexico 87321.
Navajo Indian traditions, crafts and stories.

Windfalls, North Buncombe High School, Weaverville, North Carolina 28787
Western Carolina mountain folklore and crafts.

For further information on any of the above, write:

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